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Economic and Social Council

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Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 23rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 1 July 2004, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President) ..... (Azerbaijan)

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04-41085 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Rasi (Finland), Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system (*continued*)

High-level panel discussion on "Working together to promote integrated rural development in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries"

1. **The President** said that during its present session the Council had heard a great deal about positive signs of economic growth in many least developed countries. Although that was encouraging for the development community, too often such improvements did not reach those living in rural areas. Fortunately, there was a growing awareness of the need to address rural development, and a number of major steps had already been taken in that direction. Commitments made at the World Food Summit, at the Monterrey and Johannesburg Conferences, and in the Brussels Action Plan showed that the political will existed. The solutions to the challenges of rural development lay in collaboration within and among Governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector.

2. **Mr. Ratolojanahary** (Madagascar), Vice-Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, said that over 80 per cent of Madagascar's population lived in rural areas and were dependent on agriculture, livestock and fishing. A large majority of the rural population lived below the poverty line. Madagascar was determined to introduce democratic reforms and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, notably by cutting poverty in half by 2015. The Government was also committed to the creation of fruitful partnerships, and had therefore welcomed the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Council in July 2003, encouraging alliances and partnerships among all stakeholders for the advancement of rural development. Madagascar had been designated as the pilot country for the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, which had been born of the Declaration. The aim of the Alliance was to identify, highlight and promote replication of successful business policies and practices that were profitable and that promoted the social and economic advancement of poor people in rural areas. It had attracted a great deal of support from leading politicians and businessmen.

3. A sister organization called Alliance-Madagascar had been set up as a public-interest, non-profit organization, with a general assembly headed by the Prime Minister and involving participants from the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations and financial and technical support communities. All members of the management committee were Madagascan nationals, with the exception of the United Nations resident coordinator. Actions already undertaken or planned under the Alliance included promoting and facilitating bankable projects, implementing a market-driven master plan for rural development, expanding rural credit, promoting small grants, assisting in the marketing of value-added products in the United States and elsewhere, and facilitating local and international investments.

4. The Council would play a key role in preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations Public-Private Alliance's 2005 general assembly, and might wish to highlight the critical role played by rural development in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He urged the Council to adopt a resolution recognizing the results achieved by the Alliance over the past year and increasing the resources available to it.

5. **Mr. Malloch Brown** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that no country had ever achieved sustained development by building a modern sector to its economy without first bringing its agricultural sector into line. An efficient agriculture sector freed labour to build a modern industrial and services sector. Thus, the theme before the Council concerned more than simply easing rural poverty and using resources efficiently. The world's poor were heavily concentrated in rural sectors, as were half the world's hungry people. In general, the development community was not doing a good job, and the rural sector had been neglected. Over the past 20 years, official development assistance (ODA) to agriculture had been halved, in real terms. Despite the World Bank's leadership, most of the world's agricultural extension schemes were underfunded and no longer sustainable. Within the context of developing strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the hunger task force of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had concluded that solving the problems of the rural sector depended on the political

will to sustain support, both in donor circles and in developing countries. The task force had also identified the following key objectives: improving soil fertility, especially in Africa; making rural markets work for the poor, by drawing farmers into the cash economy and allowing them to retain a much higher portion of the final price of the agricultural product; improving small-scale water management; improving the supply of improved seeds; and restoring investment in agriculture overall, most notably in agricultural extension.

6. **Mr. Harcharik** (Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) recalled that in 2003 the Council had undertaken an in-depth discussion of rural development at its high-level segment and agreed that it should be an integral part of national and international development policies. Pooling efforts to eradicate rural poverty was fundamental for a number of reasons. First, Member States' Governments insisted on partnerships, requiring that the United Nations system work effectively and reduce inter-agency competition and overlapping of responsibilities. Collaboration also made good business sense, and since rural poverty was multidimensional, and it required a holistic, multisectoral approach. Furthermore, the trend towards greater regional cooperation and integration also called for increased collaboration. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was trying to cooperate with a wide range of partners, from the global to the community level. One example of that cooperation was the International Alliance Against Hunger, involving FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) and a number of non-governmental organizations. The aim of the Alliance was to mobilize the political will and resources needed to ensure realization of the World Food Summit goal, and Millennium Development target, of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015. The level of cooperation among the Rome-based United Nations agencies was better than ever. Another example of their collaboration was FAO facilitation of South-South cooperation, with a view to enhancing solidarity among developing countries by providing cost-effective expertise and opportunities for long-term interaction at the field level. The rural areas of the developing world, particularly those of the least developed countries, were the primary setting for extreme poverty and hunger in the modern world. Eradicating those two major impediments to development was a daunting, but not insurmountable task.

7. **Ms. Weill-Halle** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that, in its timely choice of the topic of rural development, the Council had recognized the critical role of rural poverty reduction and rural development in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and added its voice to an important policy debate. A common understanding seemed to be developing on the policies and operational activities required to reduce poverty and hunger by 2015. Many countries and institutions had started to adjust their policies and programmatic orientation in recognition of the 75 per cent of the world's poor who lived in rural areas, giving new priority to the role of agriculture and rural development in their poverty reduction efforts. At their most recent summit, the Group of Eight industrialized countries had adopted a famine action plan for Africa, with new initiatives to raise agricultural productivity and promote rural development. In Africa, more than 200 million people were threatened by famine and food insecurity, and almost 50 per cent of Africans lived in extreme poverty. In response, the July 2003 meeting of the African Union had pledged to allocate 10 per cent of members' national budgets to increased agricultural production and had made agricultural and rural development priorities for action in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). International financial institutions had likewise adjusted their rural development policy, with the World Bank increasing its lending for the purpose by almost 50 per cent in 2003 and the Inter-American Development Bank expanding its support for rural poverty reduction. Most recently, the community of foundations and other philanthropic institutions had at a meeting in 2004 decided to strengthen their engagement in rural development.

8. Since its founding, IFAF had financed almost 700 projects and programmes for rural poverty reduction and rural development in 115 countries and Territories, whose people were among the most vulnerable and powerless. However, collaboration among all relevant development partners was critical in such an immense task; and the Fund had a tradition of pursuing partnerships and developing mechanisms of cooperation. It had long worked together with the two other Rome-based agencies — FAO and WFP — but

equally critical was its collaboration with non-governmental organizations — 80 per cent of them from the South — and rural people's organizations at the local, national and global level. The primary focus at the field level was local institution-building and empowerment of the poor through community development, natural resources access and management and the creation of social and economic infrastructure.

9. The private sector in rural areas had to be developed and encouraged to create more jobs and income, and crucial market access had to be brought to rural areas. Recently, there had been many welcome new policies developed by Governments — Madagascar in particular was to be commended — and by bilateral and multilateral development partners; all such commitments needed to be translated into adequately funded action. As part of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, the Council's progress report on the implementation of its own 2003 Ministerial Declaration could be one of the ways in which it asserted its role as the key United Nations organ for economic and social policy, and it might also wish to establish a mechanism to monitor critical issues not on its regular agenda.

10. **Mr. Jury** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the Millennium Development Goals were achievable and that, while their achievement depended more on action by individual Governments, the international community's integrated efforts could also be decisive. The Council had called for policy coherence and the three Rome-based United Nations agencies, although their mandates differed, were well on the way to accomplishing that. They had joined forces to promote rural development with a focus on the most vulnerable. Over 50 per cent of WFP operational expenditures in 2003 had been allocated to the least developed countries and had been primarily used in direct assistance to the poor, especially through food-based safety net activities.

11. At the international level, WFP was actively involved in both the United Nations System Network on Rural Development and Food Security and the FAO-sponsored international alliance against hunger. At the regional level, it was working principally to support NEPAD, especially in two areas identified as urgent by NEPAD itself: school feeding and the establishment of food reserve systems for emergency response. At the country level, working with other United Nations agencies and with donor institutions and governments, WFP used the safety net focus to link a number of activities into integrated rural development. School feeding, with its critical input into both long-term human and national economic development, was being combined with nutrition and health education, school garden projects, water and sanitation projects, environmental improvements, capacity-building activities and HIV/AIDS prevention. Given the devastating impact of that disease, WFP had established an HIV/AIDS unit at headquarters and had HIV/AIDS-related interventions in 41 countries, including 22 of the 25 countries hardest hit.

12. Food and nutrition programmes, so vital in the development of marginalized rural areas where the majority of the poor lived, were the first line of defence in the battle against disease and mortality. WFP nutrition programmes were paying more attention to the underlying cause of malnutrition and sought to build links with longer-term rural development activities. Currently, 20 per cent of development funds and 11 per cent of emergency resources were allocated to mother and child health and nutrition in over 28 countries, and those percentages were expected to rise in the ongoing WFP strategic plan.

13. WFP also supported food-for-work projects that simultaneously helped households and contributed to a region's long-term development. Such programmes could prevent the rural poor from having to sacrifice their assets or send their children to work, and the role of food aid in preventing the loss of assets was at least as important as its role in saving lives directly.

14. **Mr. Davidse** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, whose members gave priority to rural development in their development cooperation, welcomed the recommendation that the United Nations system should design a coherent capacity-building programme for rural development. Since, however, the scope of such a programme could be limitless, the European Union requested the United Nations to undertake a thorough assessment of existing activities and remaining needs in that area, under the guidance of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

15. Rural development should be pursued through the kind of integrated approach advocated in the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Council at its high-level segment in 2003. The United Nations

system should work closely with the developing countries to achieve such an integrated approach, making sure to involve all stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. Collaboration at the country level should be within the United Nations development assistance framework and should also be aligned to the poverty reduction strategies of the developing countries, with harmonized and simplified procedures and with country ownership. It would be useful to study the agencies' experience in developing the joint instruments with particular countries.

16. The United Nations system should, of course, continue to coordinate its implementation of the outcomes of the major conferences in the field of international trade, financing for development and increased, secure and sustainable development. The European Union was pleased that the Council was looking ahead to 2005, when it would have to assume its role in reviewing the outcome of the Millennium Declaration, including progress on the Goals, and in the integrated follow-up to summits and conferences.

17. **Mr. Diarra** (Observer for Mali), commending Madagascar for its promising initiative, expressed the hope that the Alliance would attract further financing and be expanded to other countries.

18. The performance of the agencies participating in the panel was a source of satisfaction. Rural development was the basis for food security, which itself was the basis for sustainable development. It was often argued that added value was more important in an economy than the primary sector, but the remarks just heard at the meeting had been reassuring. At its Bamako meeting in late May 2004, over which Mali had presided, the Human Security Network had adopted a Declaration on Food Security, which would be Mali's contribution to the discussions on rural development.

19. **Mr. Bellot** (France) observed that the developed countries must consider the national strategies of the developing countries in providing support. Aware of the priority of rural development, the Group of Eight industrialized countries had been working to reverse the decline in ODA for agriculture, France and the United States had convened a G-8 Ministerial Meeting to that effect and France was working with Brazil, Chile and Spain in an anti-hunger programme. France was pleased that the Rome-based agencies were taking a coordinated approach and seeking consistency in their operational activities.

20. **Mr. Rysiński** (Poland) asked the FAO representative, with regard to South-South cooperation and the development of small-scale farming, whether the examples he had given realistically represented the place of small-scale farming in the mainstream of agricultural change and whether there was indeed a future for it. He wondered what could be done to level the playing field for small-scale farmers and help them face their competition and benefit from an open-market economy.

21. **Mr. Harcharik** (Deputy Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that small-scale farming must have a future, since 75 per cent of the world's people were rural poor, and a way had to be found to help small-scale farmers raise their productivity and more effectively market their products. The South-South programme was bringing experts from the advanced developing countries to assist less developed countries. FAO had a special programme on food security that aimed to enhance productivity, diversify small-scale farms, improve the use of water, and apply activities successful in pilot projects more broadly in other countries. Success simply in those objectives would make the future more promising.

22. **Mr. Siregar** (Indonesia) said that his Government had focused its rural development efforts on microenterprise. He would like to know how international assistance could provide support for rural governance, especially in countries which were attempting to decentralize.

23. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) said that further clarification was needed on issues related to desertification and to the rural digital divide, as most of the rural poor had no access to modern information technology.

24. **Mr. Ratolojanahary** (Madagascar) said that Alliance-Madagascar was his country's most important tool to achieve rural development. The main objective set in its poverty reduction strategy paper had been to halve poverty by 2015, and without such public and private partnerships, there would be no chance of achieving it. IFAD and the United Nations system played a major role in rural development in his country.

25. **Mr. Harcharik** (Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that FAO supported the implementation of the convention on Desertification. It recommended a comprehensive approach to that difficult problem, starting with better land management. As for the digital divide, a number of initiatives were under way, including those being taken by the Chief Executives Board.

26. **Mr. Jury** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the digital divide was an example of the need for a system-wide approach. The Chief Executives Board had been looking at the question, with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) taking the lead. Markets must be made to work for the rural poor; for example, a dramatic effect could be produced in the market when local farmers received current pricing information for their crops.

27. The key to the effectiveness of the PRSP and UNDAF was the level of commitment from the national Government. Sierra Leone was one example of a Government committed to a national food security policy as an important element of its transition from conflict to reconstruction. The system was only as good as the national priority given to an issue. When a Government really emphasized a particular item, results were visible. The United Nations system could not impose priorities, however.

28. **Mr. Malloch Brown** (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that care must be taken to ensure that capacity-building was fully integrated into the system, and accompanied by investment. The Rome-based agencies, WFP and FAO, were field-based, and there was no substitute for their country-level participation in the drafting of PRSPs, as many of the decisions involved in setting priorities must be made on the ground.

29. In his view, 2005 would be the most critical year in the process of reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The Council could play an important role in the process by providing policy guidance at the international level. Strategies were best designed at the local level, however, closer to where the choices must be made.

30. **Ms. Weill-Halle** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)), Rapporteur, summarizing the key points of the discussion, said that political will of Governments and a sustained commitment to the priorities established were the key requirements for rural development. Many participants had called for adequate resources for rural development and for agriculture as a key economic sector. Off-farm rural employment, local market access, private sector development and capacity-building were other important issues mentioned in the discussion, along with the importance of coordination, which cut across many issues.

31. Many speakers had also stressed the importance of South-South cooperation and sharing of knowledge between developing countries. The commitment by the Group of Eight to agricultural productivity would require field-level coordination, which was emphasized in the UNDAF and PRSP process.

32. The role of the Council in the 2005 review of progress towards implementation of the Millennium Declaration, along with the roles of the High Level Committee on Programmes and the Chief Executives Board in reviewing the rural development agenda, had also been emphasized. The main conclusion drawn was that no rural development programme could succeed without country ownership of the process. The United Nations could provide advice and funding, but the country itself must take the lead.

(b) Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development (*continued*)

33. **The President** invited the Council to resume its general discussion of the agenda item.

34. **Mr. Oratmangun** (Indonesia) said that for most developing countries, regardless of their capacity and stage of development, rural development and poverty eradication would continue to form an integral part of their development strategies. However, in an interdependent and globalizing economy, national efforts alone would be insufficient without an enabling environment at the international level. International support was therefore crucial, given the complex challenges those countries faced. At the domestic level, limited financial resources and a lack of institutional capacity hampered efforts to achieve integrated rural development. High volatility of commodity prices, limited access to markets in developed countries,

external debt and ODA fluctuations were obstacles on the international level that impacted those efforts. There had been some encouraging initiatives by the United Nations and other international organizations to promote rural development. However, in the view of his delegation, the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/58) placed more emphasis on institutional aspects related to coordination mechanisms than on an assessment of the real impact of those institutions on rural development and poverty eradication at the country level. For example, the report highlighted the increase in World Bank lending for rural development, but did not adequately address the challenges that developing countries faced in implementing a PRSP as part of that process.

35. Given the critical importance of infrastructure in rural development, his delegation supported several innovations being explored jointly by IFAD, FAO and WFP to increase the amount of funding available for rural development. One such mechanism being implemented on a bilateral level was debt cancellation in return for a commitment by the borrower to allocate those resources to rural development and food security. Microcredit, microfinance and cooperative ventures were other effective programmes which increased the economic welfare of rural households and raised productivity. South-South cooperation also had major strategic importance.

36. Any effort to strengthen a coordinated and integrated system-wide approach to rural development should be directed at building consensus on problems and practical ways of promoting rural development. However, it was equally important to encourage international organizations to be more sensitive to the need of developing countries to pursue their own priorities.

37. **Mr. Lovald** (Observer for Norway) said that, despite all efforts the number of hungry in the world was increasing, indicating that many sectors, including production, health, education, infrastructure and management of natural resources and the environment, were not functioning satisfactorily. For those reasons, Norway welcomed the effort to promote an integrated approach to rural development. Its own Action Plan for Agriculture in Development Policy also adopted an integrated approach. Improvements in living conditions laid the groundwork for more democracy, and resulted in better safeguards for vulnerable groups, including women. Rural development was a way of promoting human rights and security.

38. His delegation welcomed the emphasis in the Secretary-General's report on increased productivity in connection with sustainable management of natural resources, protection of biodiversity and rural development, as well as the emphasis on agricultural education and research and the move to orient it more towards poverty reduction, the private sector and entrepreneurship. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research mobilized cutting-edge scientific research in the fight against poverty. Given the increasing privatization of agricultural tools, processes and products, United Nations Member States must fund research organizations that made the results of their research available to all.

39. Experience had shown that support to rural development yielded results only when it was given sufficient priority in national policies. One of his Government's objectives in its agricultural plan of action was to ensure that multilateral organizations adapted their activities to the strategies and priorities of a recipient country and coordinated with other donors.

40. **Ms. Spirnak** (United States of America) said that major donors and financial institutions had recognized that increased agricultural productivity was essential to promote rural development, and had updated their strategies accordingly. Her delegation applauded the focus of the African Union on agricultural productivity and rural development through its leaders' pledge to allocate 10 per cent of national budgets to increase agricultural production. The Group of Eight had also made a commitment to end the cycle of famine in the Horn of Africa by working closely with WFP, FAO and other United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations to continue to improve global emergency assessment and agricultural information systems.

41. No one agency could address all the issues involved in rural development in their entirety, and thus the increased collaboration among the Rome-based agencies was welcome, as was the support for NEPAD from the United Nations system. Her delegation commended FAO for its report "State of Food and Agriculture 2003-2004", which explored the potential for agricultural biotechnology to address the needs of the world's poor and those who lacked food

security. The report concluded that biotechnology should form part of an integrated and comprehensive agricultural research and development programme that gave priority to the problems of the poor. The public sector should be encouraged to direct more resources to agricultural research, including biotechnology, and capacity-building for research and regulatory issues related to biotechnology should be a priority for the international community.

42. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala), associating himself with the views of the Group of 77 and China, observed that in the United Nations there were several bodies dedicated to rural development, which could lead to fragmented policies. However, all parts of the system had the potential to work well together and rural development was a topic that lent itself to promoting coordination, cooperation and coherence. He was therefore pleased at the active participation in the preparation and execution of the high-level segment. For most LDCs, rural development was the path to development, and his Government therefore fully supported the draft resolution that had been negotiated over the past few days.

43. From the Guatemalan perspective, rural development was one of the highest priorities in the Total Agreement on Firm and Lasting Peace Ending the Internal Armed Conflict, signed in December 1996, and of the new administration that had taken office in January 2004. The United Nations had provided support for concrete initiatives such as land tenure schemes and infrastructure; the United Nations Development Programme had sponsored a panel for promoting dialogue on rural development. The goals of cooperation, coordination and coherence were common to the United Nations system and his Government, and he looked forward to concrete results from both parties.

44. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) said that rural and agricultural development were especially important in developing countries, including LDCs. While all countries must give highest priority to such development, it was also necessary to strengthen partnerships at all levels in order to achieve the desired results. His Government therefore favoured greater inclusion of rural development in the operational and development policy aspects of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the World Bank.

45. He stressed the importance of access to financing, particularly microcredit and microfinancing as the means to lift rural populations out of poverty. He was disturbed by the decline in financing and investment in agriculture. The number of hungry and malnourished people continued to increase; most lived in rural areas, particularly in LDCs. He also wished to call the Council's attention to the digital divide. One billion of the world's rural poor lived on less than one dollar a day and could not benefit from global information systems. The World Summit on the Information Society, the second phase of which would take place in Tunis in 2005, must urgently respond to the needs of the rural poor.

46. International assistance to LDCs must increase significantly and, in Africa, could be channelled through NEPAD, which gave priority to rural development. South-South cooperation was also important, particularly in the area of water resources. Control of water by the poor was essential for full exploitation of agricultural land. The World Bank's first Water Week, held from 1 to 3 July 2004, would pay particular attention to rural Africa.

47. Tunisia had always considered rural development and promotion of agriculture to be of special importance. The qualitative evolution of its agriculture had guaranteed food security, and its ability to satisfy water needs had contributed to improved commerce.

48. **Mr. Sharma** (Nepal) said that malnutrition, disease and lack of education were stifling development. The international community must do more to protect the environment, which was being depleted by populations struggling to get by with scant resources. In Nepal, a high percentage of the population lived in rural areas; most lived below the poverty line. The United Nations had contributed to rural development and poverty eradication; it had been responsible for a number of compacts, including the Millennium Development Goals, and had considerable investment resources at its disposal. Unfortunately, its efforts had been inconsistent, and rural development efforts had not produced the results expected, which had undermined the Organization's credibility.

49. **Mr. Doryan** (World Bank) said that halving poverty in a sustainable manner by 2015 would be impossible without focusing attention on rural areas, and developing countries had therefore increasingly included rural development in their comprehensive strategy to overcome poverty.

50. The World Bank had increased its rural lending by over 55 per cent over the last two years, and the number of its projects with a rural component had increased by more than one third. It had been recognized that fragmentation would not achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and the bilateral development and Rome-based agencies had come a long way in increasing the wide range of activities involving cooperation and coordination. The Global Platform for Rural Development was an excellent example of such cooperation.

51. Increasing agricultural productivity was critical to increasing farm incomes, but scientific research directed at agriculture in the developing world was decreasing. The World Bank was therefore committed to the Agriculture Science and Technology Assessment; which was one of the keys to unlocking agricultural productivity. It had also long been a supporter of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, which sponsored programmes that used science to fight poverty, such as the breeding of high-yield crops and crops with enhanced mineral and micronutrient densities.

52. Rural development was a good example of coordination of the policies and activities among the United Nations family. Demand for such coordination was increasing, particularly in LDCs, and it was therefore time for the international community to deliver better results, deeper coordination and advanced forms of harmonization.

53. **Mr. Bassani** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, following the Brussels Programme of Action, WHO had developed a framework for action to promote health in LDCs. The seven key elements included mobilization of additional resources for health priorities; efficient management and channelling of funds; strategic partnerships between public and private organizations for the production and distribution of global public goods; effective health systems developed under sound government and coordinated with donor and community support; ways of measuring progress against targets; more advocacy, social mobilization and public awareness campaigns; and policy coherence across all health-related sectors.

54. In LDCs, the majority of the poor lived in rural areas where facilities were rare and the burden of disease was greater. Therefore, more specific targeted actions were needed to improve the health of the poor in rural areas. WHO was focusing on the development of district health management systems and the decentralization of health services and strengthened coordination at the district level of health, education, environment and other sectors.

55. The challenge remained to address the causal links between poor health and poverty, and the agenda of achieving the Millennium Development Goals would contribute to addressing those challenges and helping LDCs to progress out of poverty.

56. **Ms. Bernabes** (Oasis Open City Foundation) said that the Brasilia Declaration had been the result of the kind of collaboration referred to at the current meeting. Above all, it had been made possible by the participation of small, isolated rural municipalities of the type that could benefit the most from decisions taken at the meeting. Their participation in the Declaration was their way of making their voices heard. Rural issues could not be separated from urban issues. Optimal strategies for sustainable development therefore depended on harmonious coexistence of urban and rural populations, and the great challenge was to give equal attention to the rural sector. The Declaration had given rise to some successful initiatives, including education in sustainable citizenship, beginning at the kindergarten level, and using monitoring indicators, such as benchmarks, self-evaluation and certification of competence, to help municipal authorities to reach their development goals. Such measures would promote development and quality of life in peripheral or under-developed areas.

57. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) expressed his thanks to the participants in the meeting. He had been impressed by the quality and level of the statements, as well as by the remarkable convergence across groups and regions. He was pleased at the positive reaction to the Secretary-General's report, and confirmed that the Secretariat would consider the recommendations made during the debate and the interactive session.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations E/2004/SR.24

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

27 August 2004

Original: English

Substantive session of 2004
Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 2 July 2004 at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President) ..... (Azerbaijan)

Contents

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system

(a) **Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system**

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04-41175 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Risa (Finland), Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system

(a) Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2004/59; E/2004/NGO/19-22; E/2004/CRP.1-4)

1. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2004/59), said that gender mainstreaming had been clearly established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Beijing Platform for Action. The importance of gender mainstreaming was specifically mentioned in relation to all 12 of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action, which had established that gender analysis should be undertaken on the situation of women, as well as men, in all areas before actions were taken.

2. In 1997, the Council had taken a critical step in translating that commitment from the Beijing Conference into practice. It had addressed specific recommendations to all actors in the United Nations system, spelling out the institutional requirements for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes. The importance of the gender mainstreaming strategy had been reinforced at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action. Following the establishment of the critical framework for gender mainstreaming in the agreed conclusions 1997/2, the Council had continued to play a critical role in promoting gender mainstreaming.

3. The report provided an overall analysis of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level since 1997. It highlighted achievements, gaps and challenges that the Council might wish to focus on in the review and appraisal of implementation. The report concluded that gender mainstreaming remained a critical strategy for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and that the Council's agreed conclusions remained a valid framework for gender mainstreaming and should continue to guide the efforts of the United Nations. While significant achievements had been registered, much remained to be done before the commitments on gender mainstreaming were fully implemented.

4. **Mr. Van den Berg** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and, in addition, Iceland, said that gender equality was not just an important goal in itself, but also a means to achieving and sustaining development; it was indispensable for the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, no society could truly prosper if it left the talents of half its population behind.

5. The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the United Nations. In the past decade, progress had been made in the field of gender mainstreaming. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's report and its overview of progress made and obstacles met. Awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming had increased, but that in itself was not sufficient. While gender focal points had been established, all too often gender remained a separate subject with an audience of its own. Accordingly, the European Union welcomed the self-critical look that the United Nations had taken. Key to implementing the agreed conclusions was clear accountability of management at various levels in the United Nations system. Gender mainstreaming should be a major consideration in the assessment of individual performance. A sound monitoring system was crucial in that respect but had been identified as one of the weakest areas, making it harder to measure progress and to pass judgement on accountability. Sound reporting was required to overcome that obstacle. To ensure an effective implementation of the two-pronged

gender equality strategy, the United Nations must allocate sufficient human and financial resources.

6. Expressing appreciation for the work done by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, he noted that her role was to make sure that the system functioned properly. The European Union considered such a mandate indispensable and looked forward to the early appointment of a new Special Adviser. Furthermore, the catalytic role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as enabler and facilitator needed to be strengthened. Ultimately, gender concerns needed to be mainstreamed more firmly at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations bodies and agencies.

7. The European Union welcomed the inter-agency coordination and cooperation that had been established to promote gender equality and encouraged the Chief Executives Board to take the lead role in further promoting the objective of gender equality through gender mainstreaming in all United Nations policies and programmes. The normative and operational activities of entities of the United Nations system contributed to the implementation of the legal framework agreed upon by States, including the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights into policies and programmes of United Nations agencies, to which the European Union remained fully committed.

8. The European Union considered it extremely important that in implementing the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences, the focus should continue to be on how gender-specific concerns could be better integrated into policies and interventions. It also stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming in conference follow-up and emphasized the role of the intergovernmental process. As the international community embarked on the preparations for the "major event" in 2005, gender mainstreaming should be regarded as one of the leading strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the results of recent United Nations conferences and summits.

9. The European Union appreciated the efforts of the Council's subsidiary bodies in addressing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in the areas of work and valued the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women in that respect. The Council's agreed conclusions of 1997/2 had borne fruit since the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping had made considerable efforts to reflect gender concerns in its work. Furthermore, the European Union welcomed the declaration on violence against women by the women Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other government representatives during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights and commended the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for devoting special attention to indigenous women at its recent meeting in May. The European Union shared the concern of the Forum about the multiple forms of discrimination against indigenous women.

10. The cross-cutting obligation to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between women and men had been enshrined in the European Union's basic documents. The Union's present strategy sought to build synergy between legislation, gender mainstreaming and funding tools. The dual approach of mainstreaming, coupled with specific actions, had been adopted for several European Union processes, such as the European Employment Strategy, the structural funds and development cooperation. The European Commission's efforts in that area were explicitly linked with the Millennium Development Goals, thus fostering closer collaboration between the Commission and the European Union member States, the United Nations and other development agencies.

11. The accurate measurement of progress was vital, and the European Commission currently presented an annual report on progress towards gender mainstreaming in policy areas to European Union heads of State and Government. In conclusion, the European Union welcomed the fact that the Council intended to reiterate the importance of gender mainstreaming and reaffirm the validity of its agreed conclusions from 1997, while addressing the gaps and identifying measures to accelerate implementation, including through action plans and time lines.

12. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) welcomed the ongoing efforts and the progress achieved in mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations system. Commitment to mainstreaming the gender perspective must be at the highest level in order to ensure its full and effective implementation. Furthermore, mainstreaming must be institutionalized and

universally applied to all parts and at all levels of the United Nations system. It was essential to commit adequate resources, particularly for the developing countries, for the sustained institutional development of the process and for the establishment of effective mechanisms to ensure accountability through regular monitoring and evaluations systems.

13. Gender balance in all categories of posts within the United Nations system was also relevant, especially at senior and policy-making levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Other kinds of balances, including ethnic, cultural and religious, were of paramount importance. Progress towards that goal must also take into account the continuing lack of representation or underrepresentation of women from certain countries, particularly from the developing world.

14. Pursuant to its commitments at Beijing, Bangladesh had made gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment key components of its major policies. A mechanism had already been institutionalized for mainstreaming women in development programmes in all national plans and projects. In addition to a separate Ministry for Women's Affairs, every government department had a separate unit for women in development programmes. The Government had adopted a national women's development policy aimed at equality, empowerment and advancement of women in all spheres of national life. Other innovative indigenous ideas, such as microcredit, had helped the process. Such economic empowerment had also translated into political power for women. Indeed, over the past 15 years, voters had elected a woman head of government, a woman head of opposition and over 13,000 women to local office.

15. With the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the Security Council had recognized the importance of the gender issue in its work, thus contributing to a number of positive developments in terms of mainstreaming gender issues in post-conflict peace efforts and developments. Efforts should continue to ensure full implementation of that resolution.

16. The Economic and Social Council should continue to play a leading role in monitoring gender mainstreaming in all its functional bodies, keeping in mind the need for a coordinated approach, particularly in the implementation of the outcomes of the major international conferences. While the Council and the General Assembly should provide the overall policy guidance in that respect, the Commission on the Status of Women, as the focal point entrusted with monitoring implementation of the outcomes of the Beijing Conference, should continue to play a catalytic role. Furthermore, international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the regional development banks, had an important role to play in supplementing the efforts of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies. It was time for them to exhibit a greater proactive commitment in that regard.

17. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) welcomed the fact that the existence of gender policies in United Nations entities had increased awareness and provided the necessary framework for gender mainstreaming. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions 1997/2, most United Nations entities had developed institutional mechanisms to facilitate effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The agreed conclusions and the Beijing Platform for Action also placed emphasis on women in armed conflict. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. In that regard, his delegation noted with appreciation that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had taken steps to incorporate a gender perspective in its operations.

18. Practical implementation of the agreed conclusions remained a challenge. Although several functional commissions had adopted specific decisions to mainstream gender perspectives in their work, gender issues had not been given fair consideration by the various subsidiary bodies of the Council. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council and its functional commissions should take measures to ensure that gender mainstreaming was adequately incorporated in the outcomes of the intergovernmental deliberations. While each sector had a unique approach, there was a need to harmonize gender mainstreaming activities. He concurred with the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report but wished to recommend that in future reports to the Council and to the Commission on the Status of Women should elaborate further on the issue of gender balance and provide statistics on the number and percentage of women at all levels throughout the United Nations. He called on the

Council to ensure that the goal of reaching a 50/50 gender distribution in the United Nations system, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, was achieved. Gender equality should be viewed as both a social issue and a cross-cutting concern, and the outcomes of the intergovernmental deliberations should reflect that.

19. **Mr. Copinathan** (India) said that General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on conference follow-up recognized the Council's role in the coordinated implementation of the outcomes and follow-up to major United Nations conferences. He agreed with the recommendation in the report that all agencies with mandates dealing with economic, social and environmental matters should promote further integration of rural development into their activities and programmes and should be provided with sufficient resources for the task. That would, in his view, help the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

20. He wondered whether it would be feasible to design a coherent capacity-building programme for rural development, as recommended in the report of the Secretary General. His delegation had pointed out earlier that the people themselves as potential beneficiaries needed to be involved, not only in identifying their needs, but also in making decisions on how to meet those needs and thus improve their living conditions. Given the specificity of each country, he did not believe that it would be possible to arrive at a set of multilateral norms for rural development.

21. As stated in General Assembly resolution 58/129, partnership initiatives could complement but not replace the commitments made at the government level. It was therefore important for the efforts made through partnership initiatives to be aligned to programmes and priorities set by governments at the national level. The Millennium Declaration contained specific goals on girls' and women's education and health and identified the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development. The road map for implementation of the Millennium Declaration provided strategies for moving forward as did the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative launched by the Secretary-General in April 2000 at the Dakar World Education Forum.

22. Policies and programmes for the advancement and empowerment of women must be action-oriented and targeted. More recently, the Indian legislature had enacted laws to prevent sexual harassment at the work place. The national human rights machinery brought gender mainstreaming very much to the fore.

23. He noted from the report of the Secretary-General the efforts required to ensure full implementation of the agreed conclusions and noted the linkages between the goal of gender equality and the overall goals of the Millennium Declaration. While he appreciated the frankness of the report in its assessment of the capacity-building efforts in the United Nations, he believed that some focus on the status of women would have provided an update on improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system. It was necessary to take concrete action for ensuring adequate and equitable representation of women, particularly from the developing countries, at the higher levels of the United Nations structure.

24. **Mr. Shin** Kak-soo (Republic of Korea) said that his Government was committed to fully implementing gender mainstreaming in public policies, as was demonstrated by the evolution of the national machinery in charge of women's issues, which had gone from a ministry without portfolio, to a special committee under the presidential office, and late to the current full-fledged ministry of gender equality with an expanding portfolio. It was also fully supportive of gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations, not only as a goal in itself but also as a process from which good practices and lessons could be learned.

25. He welcomed the opportunity to review the implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 and appreciated the Secretary-General's report on the issue, as well as the many conference room papers; they provided a comprehensive overview of both the record of achievements and the challenges remaining. His delegation shared the overall assessment presented in the Secretary-General's report that while much progress had been achieved in terms of raising awareness, generating political will, and establishing policies and institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming in the system, practical implementation remained a challenge. The gap between policy and implementation could only be bridged with renewed commitment at all levels of decision-making in the Organization as well as in the

intergovernmental processes that set the basic guidelines. He hoped that the result of the Council's current review would be a set of recommendations for focused action in pivotal areas that would give added impetus to the system-wide implementation of the agreed conclusions.

26. More specifically, he hoped to see greater attention and action in the following areas: the review and appraisal of the progress made toward implementing the Millennium Declaration; the implementation of the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting gender mainstreaming; and the integration of gender perspectives into peace operations, peace negotiations and peace-building initiatives.

27. His delegation applauded the contributions made by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in facilitating gender mainstreaming and capacity-building in the system and incorporating gender perspectives in their work programmes. He encouraged the Inter-Agency Network to continue in its facilitative role in promoting cooperation and developing tools, especially for monitoring and evaluation.

28. **Ms. Adjalova** (Azerbaijan) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and emphasized the importance of inter-agency coordination in the process of integrating gender perspectives into the overall policies of the United Nations system agencies. In her view, importance should be attached to the involvement of different categories of staff, including senior management, and establishing effective linkages between the strategy to achieve gender equality and the overall strategies of the respective agencies and institutions. She appreciated the efforts and progress made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming gender perspectives into programmes and operational activities.

29. The Secretary-General's report noted that gender perspectives were still not addressed in a systematic way and needed to be more widely reflected in overall development policies, including those on poverty eradication and macroeconomic development. She welcomed the fact that an increased proportion of the poverty-reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) gave attention to gender inequalities. However, once gender perspectives were reflected in PRSPs, their effective implementation required adequate resources. Accordingly, she called upon the donor community to increase the level of resources allocated to the operational activities of the United Nations system at the national and international levels.

30. She noted with concern that, even where resources were available, programme and field staff often lacked the capacity to mainstream gender perspectives in their daily work. In that regard, support to capacity-building and dissemination of information on good practices and lessons would be crucial. She supported the Secretary-General's recommendations designed to ensure systematic and effective dissemination and utilization of good practices, increased sensitivity about gender mainstreaming (including on the part of senior management) and the integration of gender perspectives into all existing training programmes. The Organization should promote gender mainstreaming as a basic strategy in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all its policies and programmes.

31. **Ms. Ekwall** (Switzerland) said that gender mainstreaming was a national priority for Switzerland. She welcomed the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59), whose strength lay in its critical analysis and well-structured, constructive recommendations. It pointed out not only the achievements but also the important gaps between policy and implementation of gender mainstreaming in the system. While she shared the Secretary-General's views on how to fill those gaps, she felt that more could have been said about the current lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation and the need for gender-sensitive context analyses, sex-disaggregated data and measurable goals with time frames and indicators. Her Government emphasized the importance of practical tools and methodologies that were accessible to the technical staff and capable of supporting monitoring on a day-to-day basis. It regarded the commitment of senior management and the definition of the roles of staff members at all levels as a critical element for successful gender mainstreaming in United Nations entities. Last but not least, the necessary resources must be allocated; budget cuts should not be a reason for not giving priority to gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of an organization, especially when a number of actions involved few or no extra resources.

32. Her country welcomed the efforts made by the agencies to incorporate gender perspectives into their

programmes and operational activities. Of great concern, however, was the persistent lack of adequate attention given to the issue in such critical areas as poverty eradication, macroeconomic development, social protection, agriculture, rural development, peace and security. Moreover, identifying the gender perspective of poverty and integrating that dimension into the poverty reduction strategy processes as well as into the reporting on the Millennium Development Goals were essential.

33. **Mr. Owuor** (Kenya) said that, with three quarters of the world's poor in rural areas, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of rural development had become preconditions for meeting the Millennium Development Goals and achieving sustainable development. The rural areas in developing countries had inadequate facilities and services. In order to change that situation, resources must be invested in physical and social infrastructure, both to improve the productive capacity of rural areas and to create employment and wealth. Actions in that regard should focus on the quality and quantity of ODA, solutions to the debt problem and the promotion of FDI with emphasis on rural areas.

34. Agriculture was the main livelihood for rural areas, but the sector continued to encounter various impediments, including low and unstable prices and restrictions in the markets of developed countries. Unless the problems faced by commodities, such as tariff barriers and trade subsidies, were resolved, rural people would have little chance of improving their standard of living.

35. While rural and urban areas were supposed to be mutually supportive, the current rural-to-urban migration pattern was putting pressure on urban facilities and causing the mushrooming of slums, high unemployment and insecurity. It was therefore imperative to strike the necessary balance in development efforts to make rural areas as attractive as urban areas. To that end, the agencies must be given adequate resources to be able to carry out their mandates successfully.

36. His delegation would like to identify itself with the assertions by UNDP on the promotion of gender equality as one of the key factors in enhancing effective development in its multi-year programme 2004-2007. Lack of capacity-building, resources and accountability had been identified as holding back the work of gender mainstreaming and it was of paramount importance to suggest concrete actions to allow for the implementation of that process. His delegation supported the decision to decentralize United Nations system operational activities at the field level, and it commended the good work being done for the poor and impoverished, especially those affected by hunger due to drought and those hit hard by the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

37. **Mr. Laurin** (Canada), speaking on behalf of New Zealand and Australia as well as Canada, expressed appreciation for the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to enhance capacities and promote coherence in gender mainstreaming throughout the system. While there had been progress in that area, the goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all programmes had yet to be achieved. The Secretary-General had noted that further efforts were required to ensure the full implementation of the agreed conclusions 1997/2. The significant gap between policy and practice would be overcome with sustained commitment at the highest levels of the United Nations system.

38. The Council and its functional commissions had reiterated that gender equality was a goal in itself, as well as a condition for the effective pursuit of their other mandates. The Security Council had made history with the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000); he encouraged all actors to work towards its full implementation. Gender perspectives must be brought to bear on all peace negotiations and peace-building initiatives, and throughout the mandates, policies and programmes of peace operations. He noted also the critical role of gender specialists in carrying out the measures prescribed by 1325.

39. The Commission on the Status of Women had recalled the commitment made in Beijing that men must take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality. The Commission's agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys called for fostering the involvement of men and boys in gender mainstreaming efforts in order to ensure improved design of all policies and programmes. That was especially important in those United Nations bodies and departments where the majority of delegates and staff were still men, such as the Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

40. Member States were also accountable for ensuring that the commitment to gender equality was reflected in the application of a gender perspective to the documents negotiated at the United Nations. His and other Governments were more committed than ever to the international consensus agreed to at Beijing in 1995. Progress towards the full implementation of the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women was essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Finally, he acknowledged the tremendous contribution made by Angela King as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and urged the speedy nomination of her successor.

41. **Mr. Takase** (Japan) said that since 1997 there had clearly been major developments in gender mainstreaming within United Nations entities. In that regard, he commended the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality for their leadership in ensuring the mainstreaming of gender perspectives at the policy and operational levels. He agreed that systematic attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes would provide impetus for mainstreaming, and said that he was concerned about the weakness of existing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

42. His Government had established a Gender Equality Bureau as a secretariat for the promotion of gender equality, with responsibility for planning and overall coordination. Similarly, a high-level Council for Gender Equality, supported by a Specialist Committee for monitoring and handling complaints, was involved in implementing Government measures and advised the Prime Minister and Cabinet on issues relating to the basic plan for gender equality.

43. Japan hoped that the analysis of gender equality perspectives in the review and appraisal of the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals would be an important focus, and that the outcome would provide practical guidance for future endeavours.

44. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) said that, while the significant progress made by United Nations and intergovernmental entities was laudable, a greater effort should be made to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Indonesia recommended that training programmes should be tailored to incorporate poverty reduction, macroeconomics and sustainable development, along with gender perspectives. The entire international community should render its commitment, support and accountability at the highest level.

45. Indonesia firmly believed that progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies and programmes would determine to what extent the development goals and targets were achieved, and that the Millennium Development Goals themselves were mutually reinforcing. Special attention should be paid to the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

46. **Ms. Simonen** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women were the cornerstones of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and that UNFPA had been at the forefront of efforts to mainstream gender into development policies and programmes. Its work had focused on reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health and their linkages with the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

47. As an organizational goal within the UNFPA multi-year funding framework, gender equality and empowerment were central to the human-rights-based and culturally sensitive approach that guided the Fund's policies and programmes in all areas.

48. Describing UNFPA activities aimed at implementing the policy on HIV/AIDS, she stressed gender as a focus of its public information campaign targeting young people, and its efforts undertaken in cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Women's empowerment and reproductive health issues in conflict and reconstruction situations, staff training in gender mainstreaming and building on positive cultural values were areas of particular relevance to the work of UNFPA. Partnerships, particularly within the United Nations system, were essential to gender mainstreaming. During the past year, UNFPA had expanded its collaboration with non-governmental bodies and civil society to enhance its performance at the country level.

49. In a 2003 global survey, UNFPA had found that countries in all regions had made considerable progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, in spite of a lack of resources and competing priorities. Legislative measures had been widely adopted, and such approaches had been bolstered by the introduction of gender issues into the education

system and the encouragement of male involvement. Nevertheless, much remained to be done with regard to the enforcement of laws, at the national level. At the international level, there was a need for further commitment in securing universal access to education and reproductive health services to provide equal opportunity for women and girls and freedom from discrimination and violence.

50. **Ms. Ekaas** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that for decades FAO had promoted the advancement of rural women and gender equality in agriculture and rural development. The supportive and proactive role of FAO governing bodies had been critical to the achievements made to date. Both the contents and the process of development of the current corporate action plan reflected the conclusions and recommendations on the status of gender mainstreaming within FAO. The plan aimed at institutionalizing gender equality within the organization's policies, procedures, programme planning and staff development and training.

51. At the institutional level, the Gender and Population Division served as the corporate focal point for gender mainstreaming and represented FAO in inter-agency task forces. The Division also produced an electronic newsletter and provided policy advice technical assistance and capacity-building in member States.

52. She outlined six measures necessary for anchoring the gender mainstreaming strategy in the administration of the organization itself and concluded by reiterating the need to convince FAO technical staff, management and member States that the investment in time and resources for gender analysis and mainstreaming actually led to improved well-being for rural populations.

53. **Ms. Sonaike** (Nigeria) welcomed the attempt to implement the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 as reported in document E/2004/59, and urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women to high-level posts in the Organization, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

54. It was encouraging that most United Nations entities had developed policies on gender equality, which used gender mainstreaming as the major strategy for achieving their goals, but the gap between policy and practice remained a major cause for concern. His delegation believed that capacity-building would strongly benefit from the enhanced and full participation of women, including as decision makers within the United Nations.

55. In recognition of the role of women as partners in development, Nigeria sought to promote equal treatment of women in all aspects of life and, in that regard, attached great importance to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and peace and security.

56. **Mr. Levald** (Observer for Norway) recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action had endorsed gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving gender equality, and that the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 later translated mainstreaming into a strategy for the entire United Nations system. Substantial progress had been made in recent years, and he supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General that improved mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and accountability were key issues. All staff members of United Nations bodies must share responsibility for effective mainstreaming of gender issues into their work.

57. Similarly, member States should take action to implement gender mainstreaming strategies. Member States could also have a direct impact through participation in the governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes, ensuring that increased attention was paid to gender equality in policy formulation. In addition, governments must demand specific results and hold United Nations entities accountable for the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies. Accountability also entailed providing resources for policy implementation; allocations for gender specialists should, in the long term, be incorporated into ordinary budgets.

58. He noted that monitoring of gender mainstreaming was often carried out in the form of specific gender assessments, audits and evaluations but said that the ultimate goal should be the inclusion of a gender perspective in ordinary evaluations and reporting processes.

59. **Ms. Dairiam** (Malaysia) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59). Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations would have a synergistic effect on the advancement of women at the national level. However, a gap remained between the policy and its implementation. The demands associated with

mainstreaming could conflict with existing institutional procedures and practices which were male-dominated and biased towards men. When gender was interpreted to mean merely the inclusion of women, and was imposed on men who did not see the point of it, mainstreaming could be seen as taking time away from "real work" and could cause resentment. Unless it was made clear why, for instance, the water sector or industrial policies had to be sensitive to women's interests, the demand for mainstreaming could be ignored. It was relatively easy to promote the advancement of women where the mandate of an organization matched gender concerns, but the goal of equality had to become an essential component in all organizations regardless of their mandates.

60. There was an urgent need for consistency in mainstreaming efforts, especially now that a number of interventions for the advancement of women had taken place, including follow-up plans arising out of the world conferences on women and the Millennium Development Goals. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a key standard-setting instrument, but was not used effectively by multilateral agencies and national institutions. Efforts to promote the advancement of women would be enhanced if the Convention's normative standards were more widely used and if mainstreaming was monitored as part of the treaty monitoring process.

61. Since State structures were not monolithic, a common understanding was needed of the sources of women's inequality and of gender relations in specific situations. Gender concerns were all too likely to disappear in a complex entity such as the United Nations Development Programme, with its regional and country offices and its various executing agencies.

62. The international community should continue to support and strengthen institutions specifically designed to promote mainstreaming, which were essential in setting standards and ensuring conceptual clarity. At the national level, awareness-raising was a prerequisite for mainstreaming. Government agencies, relevant institutions, the private sector and civil society should all be made aware of their responsibility to secure women's rights.

63. **Ms. Van Dounen Litter** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that mainstreaming was a necessary part of the organization's commitment to health for all. The benefits of health interventions, for both men and women, could be enhanced through an understanding of the impact of gender roles and unequal gender relations on access to health services. In March 2002 WHO had adopted a policy on integrating gender into its work. Most of the mainstreaming work was done by its Department of Gender and Women's Health. The Department of Reproductive Health and Research also had a unit on gender and reproductive rights, and the six WHO regional offices had focal points or units dealing with gender and women's health. Those issues were also covered by the departments responsible for HIV/AIDS, violence and injury prevention, tropical diseases, child and adolescent health, non-communicable diseases and mental health, and health and human rights. In its 3-by-5 initiative, which sought to expand access to anti-retroviral drugs for people with AIDS, special attention was being paid to access for women. The organization participated regularly in inter-agency initiatives, such as the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, and provided input on gender and sexual and reproductive health to the human rights treaty bodies, to the follow-up processes for the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration, and to the Commission on the Status of Women.

64. A number of operational challenges remained for WHO: gender was often misunderstood as being synonymous with "women" or as merely a staffing issue, and public health terminology did not yet carry the appropriate messages. Suitable tools were now being developed for health programmers, and steps were being taken to ensure that health data were disaggregated for sex, in order to highlight trends in mortality and morbidity for a range of health conditions. Another priority was to develop mechanisms to integrate gender issues more consistently into the work of WHO.

65. **Mr. Jury** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the mission of WFP was to provide access to food for hungry men, women and children in situations of chronic food insecurity, thus contributing to the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by the year 2015. In 2002 it had adopted a gender policy based on the implementation of its Policy Commitments to Women 1996-2001, and on the experience of partner agencies. The gender policy emphasized the role of women in household food security and aimed to close gender gaps among food aid beneficiaries in the field. The policy was implemented through guidelines, the collection of survey data, training at regional and country levels, and field-based research. The

Commitments to Women had now become the Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECWs). They focused on giving women more control in distributions of relief food, supporting girls in their secondary school education and out-of-school training, providing food-assisted training, especially for women and girls, practising advocacy for the role of women in household food security, increasing the numbers of female staff, especially in humanitarian assistance operations, and including women and children affected by HIV/AIDS in its operations.

66. WFP was conducting baseline surveys of the implementation of its Enhanced Commitments in 30 to 40 countries, and would follow up the results. Its Gender Unit had piloted ECW training modules at regional and country level. It would be seeking to identify good practices in measures to contribute to the empowerment of women, and would conduct field-based research on the impact of the ECWs from the viewpoint of beneficiaries. Gender perspectives had been mainstreamed into both sectoral policies and operational sectors, and the cost of implementing the gender policy had been incorporated into the organization's Management Plan for 2004-2005. The numbers of female staff had risen by 70 per cent since 1993, and now represented over 38 per cent of international staff and 40 per cent of national staff. WFP was now mainstreaming gender into its vulnerability analysis and mapping procedures. Some difficulties remained: the collection of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information was hampered by a lack of resources, and gender mainstreaming in emergency policies and responses tended to lag behind. In the Enhanced Commitments to Women, special emphasis was being placed on the empowerment of women. The organization would continue to collaborate with other agencies to ensure that mainstreaming was pursued in the longer term.

67. **Ms. Davtyan** (Armenia) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59). It was clear that gender mainstreaming was a major strategy not only for implementing the Beijing Programme of Action, but also for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was also an indispensable means of bringing about sustainable development. Welcoming the proposals to integrate a gender perspective into all United Nations programmes, she emphasized the need for such a perspective in development policies and in operational activities. She was pleased to note the increasing attention being paid to gender issues in all United Nations bodies, including the Security Council. It would be useful to further strengthen the dialogue on gender mainstreaming between the Bureau of the Council and its functional commissions. A gender perspective should also be incorporated into the 2005 review and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Commission on the Status of Women, which had a catalytic role in giving practical guidance in that respect, should be brought fully into the review process.

68. **Mr. Musliu** (Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI)) said that ADI was a Macedonian non-governmental organization which coordinated the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network in its subregion. In cooperation with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, it had developed a cross-border pilot project on establishing institutional mechanisms for gender equality at local level, based on ethnically diverse localities in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The project aimed to establish a public council on gender equality in three municipalities in each country, and to create a pilot model for gender equality structures at local level. Because of the lack of disaggregated data, it had been necessary to conduct a cross-border sociological survey on gender issues. Research had been carried out in public institutions, public and private companies, ministries and schools in the six municipalities, and a report published on the findings. Meetings had been held with municipal representatives, local NGOs, political parties, local media and civil society representatives to introduce the project and share ideas. Round tables had been held in each of the selected municipalities, involving local authority representatives, members of Parliament, NGOs and journalists. ADI was also holding gender awareness meetings every month in its own premises. The project was expected to result in new legislation and institutional mechanisms, and also to make local government more gender-aware. Although legislation in both Macedonia and Bulgaria imposed formal equality between men and women, for the process of democratization to be complete more women were needed to serve in public office. The role of non-governmental organizations was to foster the active participation of women in political activities. ADI was working with the political parties to ensure gender equality in the selection of candidates for the forthcoming local elections. Article 18 of the new law on local elections envisaged that 30 per cent of candidates for municipal office should be of a different gender.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

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Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 2 July 2004, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President) ..... (Azerbaijan)

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04-41191 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Rasi (Finland), Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system

Panel discussion: Gender mainstreaming in United Nations operational activities

1. **The President** said that since the adoption of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2, entities of the United Nations system had worked to incorporate gender perspectives into their programmes and operational activities. Specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as Secretariat departments, had initiated efforts towards gender mainstreaming in data collection, research, analysis and training. United Nations country teams led by Resident Coordinators had also provided support to Governments of host countries as they sought to integrate gender perspectives into their policies, legislation, budgets and data-collection mechanisms. It was in operational activities at the country level that the United Nations gender-mainstreaming policies had the potential to make a significant and positive impact on the lives of women and men. That could occur, however, only if the policies were fully implemented, with appropriate follow-up, monitoring and evaluation. Programme officers and field staff had to be given the proper training and resources, and had to be held accountable for carrying out the gender-mainstreaming mandates of their entities.

2. He then introduced the panellists and moderator. Ms. Noeleen Heyzer was the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and before joining UNIFEM had been policy adviser to Asian governments and had played a key role in the formulation of national development policies, strategies and programmes. Mr. Emmanuel Dierckx de Casterlé was United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Morocco, and had served in the past as Resident Coordinator in Mozambique, Division Chief in the UNDP Regional Bureau of Africa, and Resident Coordinator in Chad. Ms. Rosina Wiltshire had served as United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean since 2001; before that she had held a number of posts at UNDP Headquarters, including Deputy Director of the Social Development and Poverty Eradication Division, and Head of Gender in Development. Ms. Jyoti Tuladhar was Senior Gender Specialist in the Bureau for Gender Equality in the International Labour Organization (ILO), where she coordinated gender audits and training; previously she had served as a Senior Specialist in Gender and Women Workers' Issues for the ILO-South Asia Advisory Team in New Delhi, India. The moderator, Ms. Carolyn Hannan, was Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

3. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)), moderator, said that the panel discussion was the first in a series of events organized on the second theme of the Economic and Social Council coordination segment, "Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system". The agreed conclusions made specific reference to gender mainstreaming in operational activities, and responsibility for that must be clearly located at both Headquarters and field office levels.

4. A recent assessment of the Common Country Assessments (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process had found that although some progress had been made in mainstreaming gender perspectives into CCA/UNDAF documents less attention had been given to follow-up by incorporating gender issues in country programming. It was important to move beyond diagnosis to applying the outcomes of gender analysis to the planning and implementation of activities. Attention to gender equality also tended to be limited to sectors where gender perspectives were relatively well known, such as education and health. Other critical areas, such as economic development, environment and infrastructure, had been neglected. The importance of gender equality for all areas of development needed to be further emphasized. Inter-agency collaboration had been important for promoting implementation of gender mainstreaming in operational activities, but all country-level theme groups covering

issues such as HIV/AIDS and human rights had to incorporate gender perspectives in their work. Full implementation of gender mainstreaming would not be achieved if all responsibility was left to gender specialists.

5. Other constraints which had been identified included lack of capacity to apply the results of gender analysis at the practical level; inadequate allocation of resources; the lack of mechanisms to ensure monitoring, reporting and accountability; inadequate consultation with and involvement of women's groups and networks; and a lack of systematic collection of relevant data for gender equality and of disaggregation by sex. Identifying ways to increase the systematic reporting of country-level offices to headquarters and ensuring greater dissemination of lessons learned and good practices would be very useful.

6. There had been a number of key questions which had been raised in the review process. How could capacity to carry out gender analysis and apply the findings in a practical matter be facilitated? How could monitoring, evaluation and reporting from field level to headquarters be strengthened? What type of accountability mechanisms needed to be in place to ensure that all staff in operational activities took responsibility for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in operational activities? How could existing gender specialist resources be strengthened where necessary and more effectively utilized? How could United Nations entities in the field enhance support to the gender-mainstreaming efforts of Governments? What types of collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would strengthen gender mainstreaming?

7. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of UNIFEM) said that for gender mainstreaming to be effective there needed to be coherence and sustained attention to the goal of gender equality. Mechanisms of accountability had to be developed and financial and human resources allocated. Gender mainstreaming was not just a technical exercise; it was also political. It required shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as changes in institutional goals, structures and resource allocation. For a long time, women's rights were not seen as part of human rights. Violence against women was a marginalized issue that was on no one's agenda. As a result of a partnership between the women's movement, UNIFEM and the United Nations conferences, women's rights had been placed on everyone's agenda. As a result, national legislation had been changed. Some 22 laws had been changed in Latin America alone. Some 45 countries had national action plans to eliminate violence against women. Even so, the level of violence against women worldwide was still increasing.

8. For a long time it had also been difficult to place the issue of women on the peace and security agenda. Only recently had it become generally recognized that women were not just victims of conflict but agents of change and in fact part of the solution. Decision-making had been influenced by bringing together members of the Security Council and women from conflict zones. It was gratifying to note that new opportunities had come out of many conflict zones in the form of new constitutions and legal frameworks. A good example was that of Rwanda, where the legal framework of land rights had been changed so that women could for the first time own property and thereby revitalize the agricultural economy. Rwanda was now the country with the highest percentage (49 per cent) of women in Parliament.

9. For a long time, combating HIV/AIDS had been regarded as simply a health problem, but as an epidemic it was also a gender problem. It was extremely important to incorporate the gender perspective in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. What happened was that women were removed from the productive sector in order to take care of the sick and dying, and girls were taken out of school.

10. The terminology of gender mainstreaming was still inaccessible to many people, and the subject needed to be reinvigorated with the passion, urgency and politics of making things work on the ground with the right kind of mechanisms and resources. At the United Nations level gender mainstreaming had to come from the very top of the Organization, and not just from understaffed and underfunded gender units. Gender mainstreaming was supposed to be cross-cutting, yet there was a serious institutional deficit in the United Nations system when compared with the situation of human rights, which through a strong Centre had established a coherent understanding of what it meant. With boldness in implementation, gender mainstreaming in United Nations operational activities would bring about gender equality, women's rights and gender justice.

11. **Mr. Dierckx de Casterlé** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Morocco) said that although Morocco was making substantial progress in many ways, its women were making less progress than its men. While 100 per cent of Moroccan boys were in school, that was not yet the case for girls. Gender mainstreaming in Morocco had to address those gender disparities in major policy orientations, priority choices and development programmes. The objectives were to promote change in legislation, policies and programmes and to promote institutional change in terms of culture, structures and procedures. Without institutional change, gender equality objectives could not be achieved. The sectoral approach had proved to be inefficient, and projects targeting specifically women did not necessarily yield gender equality. Equality of treatment did not guarantee equality of results. The instruments for achieving gender mainstreaming were gender-based diagnosis, gender-sensitive human resources management, including new budgeting procedures, and monitoring and evaluation based on gender indicators. CCA/UNDAF was working extremely well in Morocco under the leadership of UNIFEM. As far as UNDP was concerned, a gender analysis had been undertaken with UNIFEM of all current programmes and projects in Morocco.

12. In the past 10 years Morocco had undertaken a very profound reform of its legislation family to ensure that men and women were equal before the law. Morocco had also initiated a very comprehensive gender-sensitive budgeting exercise in which the Ministry of Finance examined all the country's facts and figures in order to see whether or not they were helping the lot of women. There was much greater participation by women in public spheres in general. The Moroccan Ministry of Education had been very active in promoting gender equality through the revision of curricula and textbooks. Under the reform of family law, which had been approved by Parliament and now needed to be implemented, husbands and wives enjoyed joint responsibility and equality in terms of rights and obligations. The minimum age of marriage, which had been 15 for girls and 18 for boys, was now 18 for both. While in the past a marriage could be dissolved by the husband repudiating the wife, either party could now seek a divorce before a judge, who would try to reconcile them, and if he or she failed would pronounce a divorce. In the event of a divorce, the children of the marriage used automatically to live with the father, and the mother was not allowed to remarry unless she renounced her right of custody. Now, the children lived with their mother until the age of 15, when they had a free choice, and the wife was able to remarry. Morocco had undertaken those reforms entirely on its own, although the United Nations had been very much involved through the empowerment of civil society, especially by supporting active NGOs. The United Nations had examined all Morocco's family codes and the consolidation of rights within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and had found that Morocco was now fully abiding by its international agreements. The magistrates in Morocco's new family courts, some of whom were women, would be receiving training in gender equity from the United Nations system.

13. **Ms. Wiltshire** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean) said that although the Caribbean region had made a great deal of progress in the area of gender equality, it was currently experiencing reversals linked to global trade arrangements, loss of subsidies, increasing poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Women were more highly educated than men but were held back by poverty, which was one of the principal challenges to gender equality. Environmental degradation and related crises created further obstacles, and the resulting dislocation hit women hardest. Violence was also a challenge, whether in the home, at school, in the community or in society. Domestic violence included the physical abuse of boys and sexual abuse of girls, which led to crime, sexual promiscuity and HIV/AIDS. The Caribbean had the highest rate of HIV/AIDS after sub-Saharan Africa, and it was spreading rapidly among women and girls.

14. Looking to the future, she said that the Millennium Development Goals provided an excellent tool for monitoring and translating policies into practice. When monitoring systems were in place, issues were taken more seriously. There was, however, a major statistical gap, and in the absence of data on poverty myth tended to replace reality in the formulation of policy, which was extremely dangerous.

15. Capacity development and leadership training were critical, and must include an emphasis on emotional and spiritual intelligence. Mental training brought understanding, but emotional intelligence was

essential in the fight against HIV/AIDS, if behaviour was to be changed. More resources must be allocated to gender issues, and global governance instruments and instruments of the World Trade Organization needed to be more democratic. Democracy and decentralization at the global and local levels had a very positive effect. India served as a good example of a society where local women played a strong role in community affairs. In that respect, it was essential for the United Nations to be a model of gender equality if it was to have the maximum impact on institutions and on the setting of priorities in local budgets.

16. **Ms. Tuladhar** (Senior Gender Specialist, ILO Bureau for Gender Equality) said that since October 2001 ILO had been conducting a series of ground-breaking "gender audits", both at Headquarters and in the field. The process had begun as a self-assessment exercise within the institution: ILO dealt with the world of work, and therefore adopting a gender perspective meant first understanding the roles of both men and women within that context and then institutionalizing the gender perspective. Among the twelve key issues that had guided the audit were: current gender issues; mainstreaming in the implementation of programmes and technical cooperation activities; information and knowledge management; advocacy products and public image; decision-making on gender mainstreaming; staffing and human resources; and perception of the achievement of gender equality. Assessments were made by the individual work units, not by outside evaluators.

17. The audits had provided some good examples of research and technical cooperation projects that included data disaggregated by sex, gender analysis, gender-equality objectives, indicators, conclusions and strategies for the future. However, it had also indicated several areas that still needed to be addressed. Institutional documents had been analysed; many were found to be gender-blind and there was confusion about gender-related terminology. Moreover, when gender issues were discussed there was an overall focus on women rather than on gender relations. There was a need to include gender indicators within the global framework and to promote an organizational culture to facilitate gender integration.

18. Turning to what the audit had achieved, she said that one of the most interesting aspects was the "self-transformative" experience resulting from the self-reflection, team-sharing and learning at the work-unit level, which had been necessary to conduct the audit. In a more general way, the audit had turned gender mainstreaming into a shared policy objective within ILO, making the entire organization accountable.

19. The audit should not be regarded as a one-time exercise, but rather as a monitoring tool not only within ILO, but for its constituents. Several ILO members had expressed an interest in learning more about the audits; labour organizations of Sri Lanka and Indonesia had requested ILO to launch similar programmes in their countries, and United Nations offices in Zimbabwe and Viet Nam were also planning to conduct their own gender audits. As the audit had progressed it had been refined. It could now be extended as a diagnostic tool, a needs assessment tool and a monitoring tool, outside the United Nations and to States.

20. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women (DESA)), speaking as moderator of the panel, invited questions from the floor.

21. **Mr. Davidse** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked the Resident Coordinators what successful strategies they recommended to ensure that gender issues were not overlooked. He asked Ms. Heyzer to enumerate the most important criteria to be met in order to involve everyone in gender mainstreaming and to explain the role of visibility in putting theory into practice.

22. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile), referring to the General Assembly resolutions sponsored by Chile on the participation of women in the United Nations, affirmed his country's firm support for women's rights and gender mainstreaming. His delegation was in favour of achieving more balanced gender representation through the promotion of more women candidates for elective posts, including in all courts, tribunals and specialized agencies.

23. **Mr. Fox** (United States of America) said that he would like to hear from the United Nations Resident Coordinators what action they had taken or could take to increase the seniority of members of gender theme groups, a matter which needed more attention in the light of the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59). He asked the Resident Coordinator in Morocco to clarify the role of the United Nations in promoting legal reform in that country. Turning to the

"hard" areas of gender mainstreaming, he said that gender audits had often shown that United Nations operational activities were neglecting gender perspectives; he asked how the situation could be corrected. He appreciated the self-critical approach described by the representative of the ILO Bureau for Gender Equality and wondered how that organization could share with other agencies its assessment of the "hard" areas where gender mainstreaming had not progressed. He also wished to know how men could be given a greater role in incorporating the gender perspective into ILO activities.

24. **Mr. Moutari** (Observer for the Niger) said he had noted that the Security Council, in its resolution 1325 (2000), had called for a gender perspective to be included in all peacekeeping operations, and that the Secretary-General had asked countries contributing troops and civilian police personnel to increase the number of women in their contingents. He wondered how best to implement the decisions of the Security Council and other United Nations bodies regarding gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, since the military and the police were particularly conservative institutions which were far from reaching gender parity.

25. He had found the information provided by the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Morocco useful for countries such as the Niger, whose culture, like that of Morocco, had been shaped by Islam. As changes in matters like family law must be approached carefully, the experience of the United Nations in Morocco was valuable and should be shared. The experience of reforming land tenure law in Rwanda was also useful. Great progress had been made with the help of the United Nations, but for the sake of consistency the United Nations and agencies such as the International Labour Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and United Nations Children's Fund should focus on a single, harmonized goal, as was already the case with UNIFEM.

26. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) said he had been gratified to hear that the situation of women in the Caribbean had improved substantially. He asked if the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Barbados could indicate why women and girls in the Caribbean had achieved more in terms of education than men and boys, and how the region compared to other regions in the matter of women's representation in parliament and decision-making positions.

27. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of UNIFEM) said that she would first address the question of the representative of the Netherlands, which had focused on how to make gender equality and mainstreaming "everybody's business". The first step was to realize what was at stake and to understand why action was urgently needed. The issues of economic growth, eradicating poverty, combating HIV/AIDS and upholding peace and security could not be tackled without considering gender. If gender considerations were ignored, any solutions proposed would be incomplete, and resources would be wasted. Gender mainstreaming therefore made good policy sense. The next step was to give more visibility to positive examples of action by sharing experiences and building a knowledge network. She recalled that when she had approached the World Bank in 1999 to gather support for a campaign to end violence against women, she had been told that the task would be too difficult. The World Bank had nevertheless funded a World Bank-UNIFEM network which had exploited the knowledge of women all over the world regarding ways to change laws on domestic violence. By 2004, the World Bank had made ending violence against women a priority, having realized that such violence destroyed communities and capacity for action. It had realized that investing in women accelerated improvements in economic, social and democratic development and security.

28. The United Nations must enter into the right partnerships at the right time, in order to encourage progress. Although 175 Member States had signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the findings of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women were not routinely reflected in the CCAs and UNDAFs. The Organization should not shrink from linking its normative activities with its operational activities, or its worldwide activities with its local activities, as that would produce results.

29. **Mr. Dierckx de Casterlé** (United Nations Resident Coordinator in Morocco) said that Member States should continue to demand results from United Nations operational activities. They should make sure that gender issues were given a major role in any new CCA/UNDAF, since the opportunity to determine

policy in that way would not return for another five years.

30. The United States representative had asked about gender theme groups and legal reform. In the case of Morocco, gender theme groups had proved very effective, bringing together the Government, UNIFEM, bilateral donors and NGOs. The reform of family law had been achieved by harnessing the will of the people and the will of those in power. That had involved exerting gentle pressure, conducting studies and analyses of the inequity and inadequacy of the Code and demonstrating that if the situation of women and girls was not improved, the Millennium Development Goals would not be fully achieved. The World Bank had played a vital role by providing sustained assistance for UNIFEM, other United Nations bodies and women's groups.

31. The representative of the Niger had accurately described the delicate task of bringing about change in Muslim countries, many of which had accepted most of the provisions of United Nations human rights law while placing reservations on other provisions which dealt with women's rights, for cultural and religious reasons. Morocco's Head of State, as the country's spiritual leader, had helped to translate into practice the proposed changes in family law by deeming them fully compatible with national cultural and religious beliefs. Enforcement of the new Code was in the hands of the new family courts. The countries of the Arab world could profit from the successes of Morocco and Tunisia in particular.

32. **Ms. Wiltshire** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean), referring to the questions and comments of the representatives of the Netherlands, the United States of America and the Niger regarding operational methods, said that UNIFEM played a central role at monthly heads-of-agency meetings, which helped to shape the UNDAF, CCA and Millennium Development Goal policies. However, policy-making was hampered by the weakness of data collection in the Caribbean. Only Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago had up-to-date information on living standards, and ministries compiled data only along thematic lines. Action was being taken to improve statistical capacity, but even if deficiencies existed, a strong will and joint effort could bring progress.

33. In Barbados and the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the gender theme group had tended to be isolated from other theme groups. However, the terms of reference for each of the four theme groups for the region included gender issues, requiring the presence of a gender expert in all cases.

34. With regard to the "hard" areas of gender mainstreaming, progress depended on having the necessary resources and improving capacities. If global policy and local policy could be suitably connected, so that local staff understood that the matter was taken seriously by Headquarters, mainstreaming would become a reality. Policy instruments had been improved by being linked to the Millennium Development Goals and through consultation between the private sector, Governments and women's groups.

35. Turning to the questions of the representative of Grenada about the gender gap in educational achievement and women's representation in decision-making posts, she said that opening up positions of influence to women had produced rapid gains in levels of education and health. In her view, the rapid gains had happened because of a customary gender bias in Caribbean society, which required girls and women to be disciplined and take on many roles, while failing to require the same discipline and versatility of boys and men. Male children were being disadvantaged by that lack of discipline, leaving them unable to cope with the demands of the modern world. Boys still failed to see the link between education and earning power. Until that perception changed, they would be outperformed by girls.

36. **Ms. Tuladhar** (Senior Gender Specialist, ILO Bureau for Gender Equality) said that, as was clear from the gap between theory and practice, gender mainstreaming was not yet "everybody's business". The first achievement of the gender audits conducted by ILO had been to replace high-level strategy decisions, which were seen as an outside imposition, with self-imposed goals, which were seen as attributing personal ownership of a policy. The second achievement of the gender audits had been to promote a budget line for gender matters in every project. The gap between theory and practice also existed in the field of increasing women's participation in decision-making; it was easy to talk of goals, but much harder to translate them into action. By introducing the concept of assessing needs and using indicators to measure whether those needs were met, ILO had made it the

business of its broad constituency of Governments, workers and employers to increase the participation of women. A further move in that direction had been made in the Asia-Pacific region, where results in gender mainstreaming had been made a component of the performance appraisal of each member of staff. That increased ownership and accountability.

37. The United States representative had asked about the role of men in incorporating the gender perspective into operational activities. ILO had examined the influence of men and masculinity on employment issues. It had pointed out that while women bore the brunt of discrimination in the award of social protection benefits and victimization in the informal sector, men were the main victims of workplace hazards. It had also underlined that the effects of HIV/AIDS could not be considered without including the role of men.

38. With regard to the replication of experience, ILO had focused its efforts within the United Nations system and Government departments. That was consistent with the conclusions resulting from the gender audit process: ownership of policy increased wherever it was determined by the wants and needs of Governments or United Nations teams on the ground. The existing ILO manuals and instruments, which concentrated on labour-related institutions, labour inspectorates and social protection systems, were being altered to meet the needs of gender mainstreaming.

39. **Ms. Rivington** (Canada) said that she welcomed the panellists' broad discussion of governance issues, such as collecting data, developing a deeper understanding of men's and women's sides of the gender equation, linking normative and operational activities and analysing policy to provide advice for decision makers. To the traditional fields of health and education had been added such other areas as economic growth, poverty and HIV/AIDS. She appreciated the effort to demystify the policy language used, since it could easily become a barrier rather than a pathway to understanding. She asked how accountability and visibility could be enhanced, and what steps remained to be taken to ensure successful gender mainstreaming.

40. **Mr. Thümmel** (Germany) said that the presence of UNIFEM in the field was slender, and was usually identified with the Resident Coordinator. He asked to what extent the United Nations system saw gender mainstreaming as a joint issue, and how it worked in countries with no UNIFEM field presence.

41. **Mr. Cronenberg-Mossberg** (Sweden) asked why sectoral approaches had proved to be inefficient in Morocco. He would also like to hear more about gender-sensitive budgeting. It seemed that a gender perspective on agriculture and water issues was unavoidable, since women were the most directly involved in both those areas.

42. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco) said that the reform of family law in Morocco was the beginning of a process which was ongoing. However, the statement that the man was the head of the household might allow the mistaken impression that the woman was considered his servant. The law had always guaranteed equality for women; any discrimination encountered by women was not the fault of Islam. The designation of the man as head of the family did not make the woman unimportant. In fact, women's participation in government was a priority of the current administration. Furthermore, he would be interested to know the percentage of Resident Representative posts held by women.

43. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of UNIFEM) said that the physical presence of a UNIFEM representative in the field was not really necessary, as the agency saw itself as a provider of knowledge products and services. It had a field presence in most subregions, which was adequate to fill that role. Its challenge was to support country teams in new ways through the use of technology to provide gender programmes and services as needed.

44. With regard to the UNIFEM experience in Rwanda, she said that in 1994 the agency had stayed in the country and supported the Government by setting up a unit in the National Assembly to review laws for gender discrimination and change them where necessary. Many of the men had been killed, while women had had no incentive to return to the land, as they had lacked ownership or inheritance rights. After reform of the land and inheritance laws, they had gone back to their land and led the recovery in the critically important agricultural sector. An education and advocacy campaign had been required, however, to show that the reform efforts were serious. Similar experiences with legislative reform in Morocco and the Caribbean would not have succeeded, however, without a gender-sensitive Resident Coordinator.

45. As for different outcomes for boys and girls in education, three elements must be present for both boys and girls to succeed: capacity, opportunity and agency or empowerment. In many countries women had achieved a high level of capacity, but unfortunately, lack of opportunity and agency had led to out-migration of educated women. In closing, she said that in order for gender mainstreaming to take hold, the legal policy framework, institutions, budgets and public, private sector and inter-agency partnerships must be in place.

46. **Mr. Dierckx de Casterlé** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Morocco), in response to questions on how accountability could be enforced, said that it required a commitment on the part of local United Nations representatives, who should ask to see the matrices for UNDAFs and CCAs to ensure that they embodied a human rights and results-based management approach. In answer to questions on why a sectoral approach did not work adequately, he said that, while such an approach incorporated classical development activities like girls' schooling and maternal health programmes, it did not allow for systemic change. Most projects went out without gender analysis or gender-disaggregated figures. In the area of human rights, for example, most countries guaranteed most civil and political rights, but many economic, social and cultural rights had not been addressed at all.

47. Morocco provided a good example of systemic change. Once its Parliament had adopted the new family law, the codes on nationality, labour and criminal procedure, among others, had needed adjustment to harmonize with it. The process of legislative reform was comprehensive and ongoing. He pointed out that the United Nations generally worked with the elite in a country, and that the people at the grass-roots level usually did not have the same awareness of the political context of its actions. He was optimistic that the Millennium Development Goals would be met on schedule in Morocco.

48. **Ms. Wiltshire** (United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean) said that in her experience, the Resident Coordinators did not have the tools they needed. They received very little substantive support and had to be creative in finding resources. UNIFEM thus had a key substantive role in capacity-building and oversight. In practical terms, it would be very difficult to translate the good intentions of international instruments into action without UNIFEM.

49. She urged the United Nations system to take the Resident Coordinators seriously. Instruments designed by governments and civil society were a key tool for accountability and monitoring of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty reduction strategy papers tended to meet narrow World Bank and IMF requirements. Budgets for gender mainstreaming were vital, both in governments and in the United Nations system. In her experience, the culture often did not support sustained implementation of policies, and that problem must be addressed so that it would not be necessary to hold the same discussion in twenty years. Gender equality was key to every element of development work.

50. **Ms. Tuladhar** (Senior Gender Specialist, ILO Bureau for Gender Equality) said that the system had reached a critical juncture where a practical orientation was needed that included demystification, accountability for how mechanisms actually worked, and institutionalization of change in organizations.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations E/2004/SR.26

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

26 August 2004

Original: English

Substantive session of 2004
High-level segment
Coordination segment

Provisional summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 July 2003, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Risa ..... (Finland)
later: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President) ..... (Azerbaijan)

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04-41350 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (*continued*) (E/2004/L.12/Rev.1)

Adoption of the draft ministerial declaration submitted by the President of the Council (E/2004/L.12/Rev.1)

1. **The President** drew attention to the draft ministerial declaration contained in document E/2004/L.12/Rev.1. If there was no objection, she would take it that the Council wished to adopt it.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **Mr. Davidse** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union, which had hosted the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in 2001, remained committed to the objectives of that Conference. As the largest development provider of the least developed countries, the European Union stressed the importance of the Millennium Development Goals; the Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg Summits and General Assembly's review of the Goals in 2005.

4. In light of the strong political message sent through the adoption of ministerial declarations, it was unfortunate that the Council's practice of holding its debates and negotiations simultaneously made it difficult to reflect adequately the ideas put forward in plenary session; a better solution must be found.

5. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, congratulated the President on the manner in which she had conducted the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration and expressed his appreciation for the spirit of cooperation that had made possible its adoption by consensus.

6. **Ms. Schmidt** (Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that her Office would do its utmost to contribute to the implementation of and follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration and the Brussels Programme of Action in cooperation with all bodies of the United Nations system.

7. **The President** said that the Ministerial Declaration would give new impetus to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and would send a strong political signal, particularly in light of the impressive level of government representation at the high-level policy dialogue.

8. She then declared closed the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session of 2004.

9. *Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

10. **The President** invited the Council to continue its discussions under the coordination segment.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the following themes: (*continued*)

(b) Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development (*continued*)

Panel discussion with the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations

11. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Moderator and Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women), Panellist, said she hoped that the panel discussion would generate debate on both progress achieved and remaining gaps in mainstreaming a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations.

12. **Ms. Ekaas** (Director of the Gender and Population Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), Panellist, said that in 1998 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had conducted a corporate review of status in gender mainstreaming, which had been submitted to the FAO Programme Committee for review. A medium-term corporate Gender and Development Plan of Action (GAD-PoA) had then been prepared through an 18-month participatory process and endorsed by the FAO Conference in 2001. There had proved to be considerable confusion regarding the issue, and the Plan of Action had provided an opportunity to make a

clear distinction between gender mainstreaming in FAO's technical work, and gender balance or parity in its staffing; a focal point had been appointed in each of those areas.

13. Gender mainstreaming was included as an agenda item for the FAO Conference every two years and was identified as a priority area in the Organization's medium-term plan for the period 2002-2007, which was linked for the first time to the GAD-PoA. That linkage ensured increased visibility for the issue and increased accountability for FAO officials in follow-up to their commitments in that area.

14. Gender-mainstreaming instruments and guidance documents had been developed in the areas of programme planning, budget and programme implementation reporting, and new revised terms of reference for the Project and Programme Review Committee required that all projects must be assessed according to the principle of gender equality and equity.

15. While extrabudgetary support was always welcome, it was significant that the Gender and Population Division was funded under the FAO regular budget. A gender module had been integrated into the project cycle overview course offered to all staff, and new staff and newly appointed country and regional representatives were systematically briefed on the Organization's gender mainstreaming policy and instruments. An organization-wide network of gender mainstreaming focal points had been established and an electronic newsletter had been launched to facilitate sharing of best practices among staff. A comprehensive set of handbooks on gender analysis had been developed for professional staff in various agricultural and rural subsectors, including immigration, rehabilitation and food security, and two technical divisions had organized gender seminars for their management and staff.

16. However, only about 20 per cent of the major outputs included in the medium-term plan had been selected for special attention and cross-referencing to the GAD-PoA because that percentage had been considered manageable in terms of follow-up. Many managers and technical staff were not certain how to go about mainstreaming a gender perspective in their own areas of specialization, and a high staff turnover required continuing investment in gender mainstreaming training; there was also a tendency to look outside the regular budget for financial and technical support in the area of gender mainstreaming. Indicators for measuring outcomes at the country level and gender-disaggregated statistics from the agriculture sector for the assessment of such indicators were needed.

17. High-level officials needed to assume greater responsibility for gender mainstreaming, since the gender focal points often lacked the necessary authority; both incentives and sanctions were also needed in order to motivate managers. The value placed on gender sensitivity and gender analysis expertise should be better reflected in post descriptions and, at the level of the United Nations system, a gender perspective should be mainstreamed into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

18. One lesson learned was that a proactive role by governing bodies and cross-regional support were critical to success. Corporate focal points must be at a sufficiently high level to have timely information on strategic policy and planning and the ability to influence them; they must also have some regular funds available for catalytic and leveraging purposes. A strategic alliance must be formed between the corporate gender focal points and the directors and high-level staff responsible for programme planning, implementation reporting, monitoring and evaluation and for staff development and training.

19. As FAO was a science-oriented specialized agency, advocacy within the Organization must be noted in solid data, including good practices. Unfortunately, gender mainstreaming was often perceived as a mere bureaucratic requirement; it was therefore important for gender focal points to offer constructive, timely advice rather than acting as the "gender police".

20. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs), Panellist, said that the Department of Political Affairs sought to mainstream a gender perspective into the areas which were the main focus of its activities — early warning, conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building — using the Council's agreed conclusions, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the recommendations contained in the

report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154) as guidance tools.

21. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs had clearly articulated his commitment to gender mainstreaming and expected his staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, to act accordingly. Senior managers, together with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other United Nations agencies, had participated in a number of meetings and expert workshops on gender mainstreaming and on women, peace and security. His Department, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Division for the Advancement of Women had joined in sponsoring one such meeting on the topic of peace agreements as a means of promoting gender equality and another on enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries.

22. The Department's staff had gender checklists, provided by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, to be used in preparing for assessment missions. Regional divisions also provided Security Council field missions with gender elements for inclusion in their terms of reference and, through its own field missions, worked with local women's organizations involved in peace-building. It was important to provide envoys, representatives and special representatives of the Secretary-General with specific gender guidelines at the start of their missions and to ensure that they integrated a gender perspective into their own work. For the first time, a discussion of gender mainstreaming had been included in the agenda of the May 2004 meeting of the Department's field presences; participants had been asked to share their experiences, describe the challenges that they faced in integrating a gender perspective into their activities and recommend additional policies and actions which could be implemented at the Headquarters level in order to facilitate their efforts.

23. The Department recognized the importance of partnerships with civil society and welcomed the opportunity to interact with NGOs and local women's organizations to facilitate women's participation in formal peace negotiation processes as well as in peace-building activities. It had, for instance, facilitated the participation of 21 Congolese women at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in South Africa and in West Africa had collaborated closely with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP to support the work of the Mano River Women's Peace Network and enable its members to attend regional meetings and summits. The DPA Electoral Assistance Division had made a conscious effort to increase the number of registered female voters and to increase their participation in the political processes. Efforts had also been made to target women in Afghanistan and Nigeria through voter registration messages. In that regard, although half of all Afghan registration and training officers were women, the challenge was to identify literate women who were also able to travel without male relatives as escorts.

24. The Department had encouraged training for its gender focal points and for its staff in general; in the past two years, the gender focal point had participated in gender training related specifically to the work of the Department.

25. While peacemaking activities tended to be funded from the regular budget, peace-building activities targeting women were often financed from extrabudgetary contributions. It was therefore difficult to secure regular, predictable funding for the latter. Yet another challenge was the need for Member States to provide the Secretariat with suitable female candidates for senior level positions in the United Nations.

26. **Ms. Nuru** (Senior Adviser, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), Panellist, noted that progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment had been uneven; despite increased global awareness, the rights of women were still under threat in many countries. Perhaps the problem of greatest concern was the growing violence against women and girls in situations of conflict, where they were not only the victims of warfare, but were also directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies and assault as deliberate instruments of war.

27. Noting that the United Nations organizations were making progress on gender mainstreaming and taking appropriate action, she said that 60 per cent of the staff of her Office, for example, were women. In the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, women remained the vast majority of the poor in both economic and non-economic terms. In that regard, the Brussels Programme of Action had articulated the need to build human capacity in least developed countries,

emphasizing that the full potential of men, women and children needed to be realized. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming were an integral part of efforts aimed at poverty reduction. It was important to give women and girls equal access to education and health services, including protection against diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and provide them with adequate nutrition. Other vital gender-related issues included promoting good governance, facilitating women's access to decision-making positions and economic power and protecting them against domestic violence.

28. She hoped that the 2005 review would address lessons to be learned and develop a strategy for the future. The strengthening of national focal points and coordination and monitoring of country-level responses would also yield real lessons and challenges and ultimately pave the way for a better future for the majority of women. The lack of financial resources also posed a major challenge in dealing with gender equality and gender-mainstreaming issues. The Office she represented was looking forward to working with all United Nations entities, national focal points and Member States to achieve the goal of women's empowerment and full gender equality.

29. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (Director of the New York Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), Panellist, said that the gender policy, Habitat Agenda, strategic vision and Governing Council resolution 19/16 provided the mandate for gender mainstreaming in UN-Habitat. Considerable progress had been made in mainstreaming gender concerns into the UN-Habitat work programmes, including in the areas of water and sanitation, and disaster management with respect to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Somalia. A number of policy papers had been written, studies had been carried out and staff had been provided with guidelines for gender mainstreaming in their work. In addition, in May 2004, a decision had been taken to make gender impact assessment an integral part of the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all work programmes. In municipal planning and development, a UN-Habitat-sponsored innovative programme on gender-responsive local government, started in Latin America and the Caribbean, had been replicated in the Asia/Pacific region in 2003 and 2004. The programme aimed at promoting gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in municipal planning and development through competitions and awards and had attracted the participation of over 100 cities in 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Such participation gave women much-needed experience in the workings of local government and the potential to participate in government at the national level.

30. UN-Habitat had benefited from sharing of experience and cooperation with other agencies of the United Nations system and such cooperation needed to be further strengthened. Capacity-building was an area that needed improvement, particularly with regard to gender analysis, planning and budgeting skills. In that regard, a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements would be prepared and workshops focusing on specific areas would be conducted for staff. Monitoring and evaluation also needed strengthening and gender indicators needed to be developed. Women were still invisible in data, and information on slum upgrading estimates needed to be developed. At the country level, the impact of UN-Habitat work would be greater if it received more support from women's organizations and ministries for women's affairs. Lastly, clear links needed to be established between urban and rural development, while the role of women in the rampant urbanization of the developing world needed to be looked at more closely.

31. **Ms. Imam** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), Panellist, said that gender equality, gender equity and the empowerment of women had formed the cornerstone of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Accordingly, UNFPA had spearheaded the effort of mainstreaming gender into national development policies and programmes in a human rights-based and culturally-sensitive approach which guided all the Fund's activities in CCAs, UNDAFs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The Fund continued to be active in the efforts of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to institute gender budgeting and mainstreaming and to advance the role of women in achieving peace and security in line with Security Council resolutions. It also provided specific resources for and focused special attention on women's empowerment and the effort to reduce gender-based violence. Knowing that girls were more vulnerable than boys to HIV infection, UNFPA had a gender perspective at the centre of its HIV/AIDS policy and had always stressed the need to address reproductive health issues in conflict and

reconstruction situations. Not only had it expanded its partnerships with civil society organizations but it was also cooperating with the International Fund for Agricultural Development to document the linkage between poverty and population and to highlight the gender dimensions of the issue. To build the capacity of its staff and partners for gender mainstreaming, UNFPA had issued policy statements, conducted training in gender budgeting and was developing guidelines on culturally sensitive approaches. In supporting national capacity-building in gender issues, UNFPA had set the example by achieving 50-50 gender parity in its own staffing at all levels.

32. Through a global survey conducted in 2003, UNFPA had continued to monitor the progress achieved by 150 countries in promoting gender equality and empowering women. To develop internal accountability, it had become mandatory for inter-divisional project appraisal groups (including gender experts from the Culture, Gender and Human Rights Branch) to review all projects exceeding US$ 250,000. One of the most pressing challenges was to close the gap between the enactment of laws and policies and their implementation. It was necessary to ensure that internationally agreed plans of action, particularly those relating to reproductive rights and health, were upheld and implemented. One way of improving the framework for gender mainstreaming would be to place the issue on the agenda of meetings of economists and planners and ensure that gendered analysis and concerns were present from initial planning and decision-making to implementation and evaluation rather than at the point when the basic policy and programme structures had already been set. Another way would be to include gender indicators across all monitoring and evaluation frameworks for all programmes, sectors and issues, use those indicators to appraise programme activities and to decide resource allocations and then hold staff at all levels accountable for implementation. At that level, gender mainstreaming indicators should be factored into the performance planning and appraisal of individual staff members.

33. **Mr. Davidse** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, thanked the Secretariat for having made available a useful overview of baseline information on gender mainstreaming in various United Nations entities. On the issue of accountability, he wondered how, even with policy commitment at the highest level, United Nations staff at all levels could be held accountable for integrating gender perspectives in their work. He asked the panellists to give examples of measures that would contribute to accountability and whether there should be a focus on the role of men specifically in gender mainstreaming. On the issue of training, he asked how the message of gender-awareness was framed for the more sceptical staff members and what would ensure that the training and capacity-building reached their target audiences. If advocacy was to be built on sound evidence and people convinced of the reason for gender mainstreaming by showing them the benefits of adopting gendered strategies, would the same argument apply to the design of training modules? Then again, how would one ensure that the right target audience was reached, the goals met and how would the impact of such training be measured? The European Union attached great importance to the integration of a gender perspective in United Nations activities relating to peace and security and he asked how the Secretariat would improve its reporting to the Security Council.

34. **Ms. Stewart** (Canada) requested more information about institutional efforts in gender mainstreaming. Since the Secretary-General's report revealed that less than 15 per cent of reports to the Council included gender analysis, she asked whether a plan of action would be developed to address the deficiency. Similarly, she wanted to know whether the Department of Political Affairs had plans to assign a senior staff member to gender mainstreaming on a full-time basis. Following the comments on the dearth of resources, she asked panellists to share their experiences of gender budgeting as a tool to ensure the mainstreaming of gender through adequate resource allocation.

35. **Ms. Msuya** (United Republic of Tanzania) asked how the implementation of international agreements relating to gender mainstreaming could be accelerated at the national level as a reflection of what the United Nations system had achieved and to what degree the agencies coordinated their activities to ensure the desired results.

36. **Ms. Nuru** (Senior Adviser, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), Panellist, said that at the country level there were several mechanisms that enabled gender mainstreaming and gender equality to be monitored and coordinated under the United Nations

Resident Coordinators' operational activities for development. Both the CCAs and UNDAFs provided a context for countries to focus specifically on a number of topical issues and gender had always been considered as a cross-cutting issue. In her experience, there was also the advocacy which enabled countries to examine their own legislation, constitution and regulations to ascertain where they fell short of compliance with internationally agreed objectives. At the level of the United Nations system in New York, the coordination and interagency network identified the basic issues that needed to be addressed by the various countries. Theme groups dealt with such issues as culture, exclusion, gender budgeting and lack of income.

37. **Ms. Ekaas** (Director of Gender and Population Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), Panellist, said that Member States should hold reporting institutions and their representatives accountable instead of concentrating on their gender focal points only. More colleagues were needed, including men, to lead proactively and knowledgeably, as gender focal points. First, by enforcing a requirement that such focal points be regular staff, FAO had raised the number of men serving as gender focal points. Second, by introducing the principle of rotation, it had made more of its staff gender-aware than before. To reach the sceptics with capacity-building and training efforts, FAO had resorted to mandatory training in gender; a survey conducted in 1998 had revealed that, had the training not been mandatory, most trainees would not have opted for what they currently saw as a beneficial exposure. Subsequently, FAO had moved from stand-alone gender training to modules integrated in other courses such as project cycle overview or induction courses. It was now looking at distance-learning modules for decentralized staff and monitoring and evaluation modules which would form part of training in results-based programming for management staff. A more user-friendly option was to work with receptive managers who wanted the course tailored to their substantive area of work and were willing to attend as a signal to their staff of their own involvement. While the tailoring exercise was time-consuming, it paid off in terms of buy-in and staff ownership. Regarding country-level coordination, FAO was working with the Statistics Division to incorporate gender perspectives in the next agricultural census so as to secure more gender-disaggregated data.

38. **Ms. Gebre-Egziabher** (Director of the New York Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), Panellist, said that the Programme Review Committee considered each of UN-Habitat's programmes before implementation, enabling her organization to mainstream gender into its operational activities at every level starting with the recruitment of Chief Technical Advisers and habitat managers at the country level. Also, in order to promote country ownership, UN-Habitat encouraged Governments to work with women's organizations and with local authorities, parliamentarians and civil society at large. Apart from the project leader's responsibility to ensure that gender was mainstreamed in the document, UN-Habitat also had a task group of interested staff members who met occasionally to support the gender policy unit from their own perspective and to conduct a collective peer assessment. Whether in advocacy at the country level for good urban governance, secure tenure or property and land rights, the message had to reflect all gender perspectives and inclusiveness. Whether working at the global or country level, each staff member was held accountable for projecting that perception in operationalizing the concept of gender mainstreaming. Obviously, that had to be confirmed with the commitment at the country level to ensure equal access to the decision-making process in terms of urban governance, land, housing and basic infrastructure.

39. **Ms. Imam** (United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)), Panellist, said that, to hold its staff accountable, UNFPA was making gender mainstreaming one of the indicators for all staff appraisals. The inter-divisional project appraisals included the gender perspectives: before projects were approved, they had to include mainstreaming and address issues of gender equality and equity. Like the representative of FAO, she believed that specific reporting requirements would compel governing boards to focus on what they were doing or failing to do. In terms of training, UNFPA was working to produce a basic training course for all staff. In addition, the culture, gender and human rights aspects were being integrated into training modules as cross-cutting themes that would be reflected in any other training programmes such as commodity supply or reproductive health. For country-level coordination, UNFPAs country support teams would be using their long-term presence as facilitators to enable States, NGOs and

civil society organizations jointly to promote mainstreaming.

40. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs), Panellist, said that accountability worked best when the responsibility was assumed at the highest level and was both internally and exogenously driven. With the Secretary-General having set the tone, all Departments were being held accountable for gender mainstreaming internally but also externally by stakeholders. As far as reports to the Security Council were concerned, some notable progress was being made with regard to peace and security work. Departments were placing greater emphasis on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and the yearly reporting had become important because Member States were demonstrating that they took it seriously. Those involved in peace-making and peace-building were also becoming increasingly aware that the legitimacy and credibility of that endeavour would be enhanced if gender awareness was a requirement.

41. It would indeed be highly desirable to have a senior management position dedicated to the function of a gender focal point in DPA. Pending such an appointment, the Department was considering the possibility of rotating the function among its senior managers and discussing whether the person appointed should be male or female. To measure the impact of training, DPA was looking at the effective transfer of knowledge and skills from the workshop to the workplace. Since the indicators of impact were a function of behavioural change, he considered that the gender requirements explicit in the operative part of Security Council resolution 1528 (2004) on Côte d'Ivoire marked a shift in that sense. Also, the efforts of some United Nations envoys had ensured that newly appointed Governments included a proportion of women ministers at cabinet level. DPA had encouraged that trend in the area of conflict prevention by giving preference to projects that integrated a gender perspective or specifically targeted women's associations that were active in peace and security. With regard to gender budgeting, DPA was working with UNIFEM, UNFPA and other agencies to recruit field budget officers to be trained in results-based budgeting and would be sensitizing them to gender-based budgeting. The Department would then monitor budgets received from their missions to assess their degree of gender sensitivity.

42. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Moderator and Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women) summarized the proceedings and thanked panellists and participants for the level and breadth of discussions.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.